

CLIMATE RESILIENCE & ADAPTATION

ISSUE SUMMARY:

EPA is anticipating and preparing for the risks posed by climate change to ensure it continues to fulfill its mission of protecting public health and the environment now and in the future. EPA does this by strengthening the “adaptive capacity” of its partners in states and tribes and helps to ensure that investments in environmental protection (*e.g.*, costly water infrastructure) made with scarce taxpayer dollars are effective even as the climate changes.

BACKGROUND:

EPA’s climate resilience program has been focused on building the “adaptive capacity” of EPA’s partners in the states, tribes, and local communities through: (1) training to help increase awareness of the ways climate could affect environmental and public health outcomes relevant to EPA’s mission, (2) provision of tools, data and information to empower communities to effectively implement adaptation strategies, and (3) support for climate resilient investments.

Much of our tools, data and other information is contained in EPA’s Climate Adaptation Resource Center (ARC-X), an online system designed to help *all* 40,000 communities across the nation increase resilience and anticipate and prepare for climate impacts. ARC-X was designed to support local government officials in every community, regardless of their level of expertise or experience dealing with the climate impacts. ARC-X provides users with an integrated package of information tailored specifically to their needs, based on where they live and their issues of concern. ARC-X includes: insights about the implications of climate change; adaptation strategies to address the risks posed by climate change; case studies that illustrate how other communities with similar concerns have already successfully adapted, along with instructions on how to replicate their successful efforts; tools available from EPA to help implement the adaptation strategies; and sources of funding from EPA and other federal agencies.

KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:

☒ Congress ☒ Industry ☒ States ☒ Tribes ☐ Media ☒ Other Federal Agency
☐ NGO ☒ Local Governments ☒ Other: Local Communities

EPA’s key stakeholders are the 40,000 local communities – many of which are middle- to smaller-sized underserved communities – and 566 tribes vulnerable to the impacts of natural disasters and variations in the climate. In addition, EPA works closely with other federal agencies to improve collaboration and streamline the sharing of federal resources to increase the nation’s climate resilience.

MOVING FORWARD:

EPA has made significant resource investments to build its own capacity to support climate resilience internally and in the nation's 40,000 communities, including tribal and Environmental Justice (EJ) communities. Opportunities to build upon those efforts include:

1. Expand use of the ARC-X by partnering with local communities through existing networks (*e.g.*, Conference of Mayors) to inform development and implementation of resilience and adaptation plans.
2. Enhance the ARC-X to address specific information needs identified by businesses making investments to increase their resilience to weather extremes and climate change.
3. Support the development of state-level versions of the ARC-X that contain more detailed content relevant to their communities. (A state-level version for Indiana has already been completed. Four additional versions are under development.)
4. Develop additional tools and resources designed specifically to support EJ communities concerned about their vulnerabilities to climate impacts.

LEAD OFFICE/REGION:

OTHER KEY OFFICES/REGIONS:

- Lead Office: Office of Policy (Office of the Administrator)
- Cross-EPA Work Group on Climate Adaptation: Chaired by the Office of Policy with representatives from Program Offices and all 10 Regional Offices